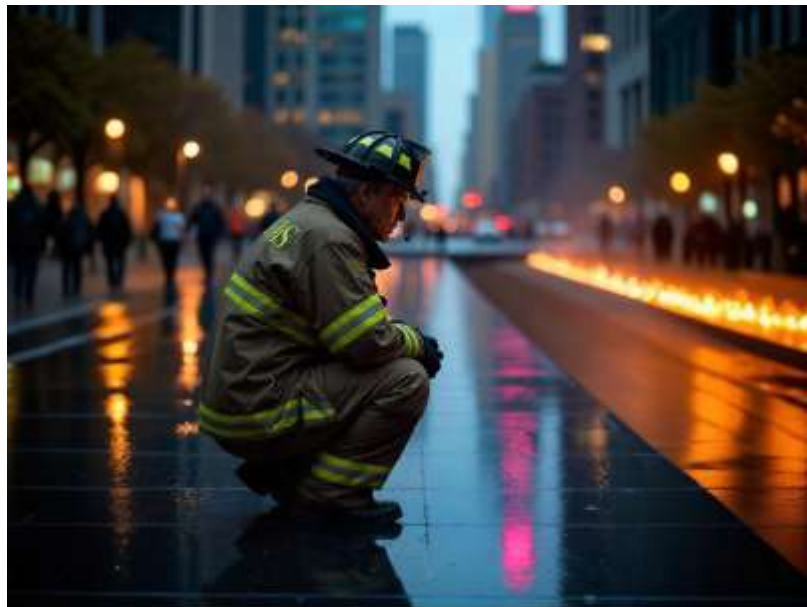


## UPF International: Building Peace in the Shadow of Tragedy: 24 Years after 9/11

Tageldin Hamad  
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On the twenty-fourth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the Universal Peace Federation solemnly joins the world in remembering the victims, honoring the survivors, and reaffirming our collective aspiration for a future free from violence and fear. The events of that day claimed nearly 3,000 lives from over 90 countries and marked a profound turning point in global efforts to address extremism and promote human security.

In the immediate aftermath, our predecessor the Interreligious and International Federation for World

Peace (IIFWP) convened a peace conference in New York City. That urgent gathering brought together voices of faith, governance, and civil society to reject blame and sow the seeds of healing. Our founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han emphasized that no religion should be condemned for the actions of the few who distort its message. Faith, they insisted, is not a cause of violence, but a wellspring of compassion and peace.

In response to the wave of suspicion and misunderstanding directed toward Muslim communities after 9/11, our movement organized a series of international forums and Muslim peace summits across Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. These events brought together Islamic scholars, political leaders, and faith representatives to affirm the core message that Islam is a religion of peace. One such voice was H.E. Abdurrahman Wahid, former president of Indonesia, who publicly affirmed that the founders' interreligious vision "represented a profound call to peace through religion" and offered the world "a model of reconciliation deeply rooted in faith."

These summits served not only to deconstruct stereotypes but also to initiate long-term partnerships for education, humanitarian outreach, and interfaith dialogue, countering radicalization through inclusion, not isolation.

Dr. Hak Ja Han, a lifelong advocate for women's leadership in peacemaking, called for greater inclusion of women and youth in building cultures of dialogue and resilience. Her vision is rooted in the idea that families are the first schools of peace. It continues to guide our work in countering extremism at its roots, where alienation and despair begin.

Today, international institutions affirm that terrorism is not rooted in faith, but in systemic injustice, poverty, marginalization, and the absence of opportunity. According to the Global Terrorism Database, more than 200,000 lives have been lost to terrorism since 2001. The United Nations, through Sustainable Development Goal 16 and General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/18, urges all stakeholders to address these root causes with inclusive, whole-of-society approaches grounded in justice and human dignity.

Over the past two decades, UPF has remained committed to this path. Through initiatives such as the Middle East Peace Initiative, the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), and peace education efforts in schools and communities, we have supported victims of terrorism and worked to prevent cycles of radicalization. Our Ambassadors for Peace, active in over 160 nations, continue to foster mutual understanding through dialogue, service, and multilateral cooperation.

We call on leaders at every level to build bridges before crises erupt. As we mark this solemn day, may we resolve to turn sorrow into solidarity, and tragedy into transformation. As one global community united by the values of humanity and dignity, let us advance together toward a future shaped not by fear, but by hope born of shared responsibility.